

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3223

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCLANT

JCS WASHDC

USCINCEUR

USLOSACLANT

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 4490

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, NL

SUBJ: NETHERLANDS NAVAL FORCE REDUCTION PLANS; BILATERAL DEMARCHES
WITH SELECTED ALLIES

REF: A. STATE 198550 DTG 210002Z AUG 75

B. USNATO 4356 DTG 151115Z AUG 75

C. USNATO 4438 DTG 211730Z AUG 75

D. LONDON 13133 DTG 221850Z AUG 75

E. THE HAGUE 3427 DTG 081448Z JUL 75 (NOTAL)

F. JCS 221434Z AUG 75 (NOTAL)

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SUMMARY ACTING DEFENSE ADVISOR BGEN SEIGLE MET WITH DEFENSE
ADVISORS OF SELECTED ALLIES AUGUST 22 TO DISCUSS NETHERLANDS
NAVAL REDUCTION PROPOSALS, AND ASK FOR BILATERAL DEMARCHES OF
THESE ALLIES WITH NETHERLANDS TO REQUEST RECONSIDERATION.

ALLIED REACTION WAS POSITIVE IN ALL CASES, AND STRONG IN CASE OF FRG AND BELGIUM. WE WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS, AS CONSULTATIONS PROGRESS, TO BOLSTER ALLIED OPPOSITION TO REDUCTION PROPOSALS, ON BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY GROUNDS. IN ORDER TO DO THIS, WE NEED DETAILED INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL AND MILITARY IMPACT OF THE REDUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ACTING DEFENSE ADVISOR BGEN SEIGLE CALLED ON DEFENSE ADVISORS OF SIX ALLIED NATIONS (UK, FRG, CANADA, NORWAY, DENMARK, BELGIUM) AUGUST 22, IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE REF A, TO INFORM THEM OF U.S. REACTION TO LATEST DUTCH NAVAL FORCE REDUCTION PROPOSALS (REF B) AND SUGGEST ALLIED DEMARCHES TO NETHERLANDS, BOTH AT NATO HEADQUARTERS AND IN CAPITALS. SEIGLE STRESSED:

A) POSSIBLE ADVERSE POLITICAL EFFECT OF DUTCH PROPOSALS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF NEED FOR ALLIED SOLIDARITY IN WAKE OF CSCE;

B) NEED FOR ALLIANCE MEMBERS TO FULFILL COMMITMENTS ADOPTED IN MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE 1975 TO MAINTAIN FORCES AT PRESENT LEVELS OR LEVELS FORESEEN IN PLANS CURRENTLY DECLARED TO NATO;

C) SEEMING MILITARY IRRATIONALITY OF DUTCH DECISION TO DECOMMISSION CRUISER AFTER INVESTING FUNDS IN REFITTING, DISESTABLISHING LARGE PORTION OF MARITIME AIR TRAINING AND SUPPORT CAPABILITY PRIOR TO REPLACING MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT; AND

C) NEED FOR NETHERLANDS' ALLIES TO EXPRESS THEIR COMMON DISAPPOINTMENT

WITH DUTCH DECISIONS AND DESIRE TO SEE THEM REVERSED. SEIGLE GAVE EACH DEFENSE ADVISOR COPY OF TALKING POINTS WHICH AMBASSADOR BRUCE HAD GIVEN TO NETHERLANDS CHARGE BUWALDA THE PREVIOUS DAY (REF C), AND SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT EACH ALLY APPROACH NETHERLANDS AUTHORITIES IN BRUSSELS AND IN CAPITALS. HIGHLIGHTS OF ENSUING DISCUSSION FOLLOW.

2. REACTION IN CAPITALS. ALL DEFENSE ADVISORS PROMISED TO FORWARD U.S. REQUEST FOR ALLIED BILATERAL DEMARCHES WITH NETHERLANDS
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TO THEIR CAPITALS. ONLY FRG (BGEN SCHUNEMANN) HAD RECEIVED PRELIMINARY REACTION SO FAR: BONN LOOKS ON NETHERLANDS MOVE AS A "DIRTY TRICK", IN THAT PREVIOUS ALLIED CONSULTATIONS HAD SUCCEEDED IN REVERSING DUTCH DECISIONS ON GROUNDS OF MBFR COMMITMENTS; DUTCH NAVY WAS NOW SINGLED OUT BECAUSE OF INAPPLICABILITY TO MBFR.

3. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. ALL DEFENSE ADVISORS FELT THAT AUGUST 14 BUWALDA LETTER DESCRIBES A FAIT ACCOMPLI. DENMARK (MR. ROSENTHAL) NOTED THAT STRUCTURE AS WELL AS TONE OF LETTER (FIRST OUTLINING DUTCH PLANS, THEN OFFERING TO CONSULT) HINTED THAT CONSULTATIONS WILL BE ONLY WINDOW-DRESSING. HE TERMED THE DUTCH DECISIONS "VERY UNFORTUNATE", AND DISAPPOINTING TO HAVE

SO SOON FOLLOWING EARLIER CONSULTATIONS ON NETHERLANDS DEFENSE PLANS. BGEN SCHUNEMANN AND ACTING BELGIAN DEFENSE ADVISOR (LTC QUANIERS) NOTED THAT COALITION GOVERNMENT IN NETHERLANDS WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO MAKE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS WITHOUT INCLUDING DEFENSE. SCHUNEMANN ADDED THAT FRG WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PARALLEL FORMAL OBJECTION TO DUTCH PLANS WITH PRIVATE CONTACTS BETWEEN DEFMIN'S LEBER AND VREDELING, AS WAS CASE DURING EARLIER CONSULTATIONS ON NETHERLANDS DEFENSE PLANS. UK (MACDONALD) SAID THAT UKEMB HAGUE HAD ADVISED HIM THAT DEFESNE SEEMED TO BE "TAKING SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE" OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE CUTS IN THE ROUND ABOUT TO BEGIN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. ALL DEFENSE ADVISORS AGREED WITH SEIGLE'S POINTS ON ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY IN WAKE OF CSCE AND ADHERENCE TO MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE COMMITMENTS. ROSENTHAL NOTED DENMARK'S RELATIVE QUIESCENCE DURING PREVIOUS CONSULTATIONS ON ALLIED DEFENSE REDUCTIONS, BUT HINTED THAT DENMARK MIGHT PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE THIS TIME. SCHUNEMANN AND QUANIERS, ALTHOUGH UNINSTRUCTED, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THEIR CAPITALS WOULD PROBABLY TAKE A HARD LINE WITH THE DUTCH. MACDONALD, ALTHOUGH NONCOMMITAL ABOUT STRENGTH OF PROBABLE LONDON REACTION, DID NOT LINK THE DUTCH PROPOSALS WITH RECENT UK CUTS, AS DID ALISTAIR HUNTER DURING CONVERSATION WITH AMEMB LONDON OFFICER ON SUBJECT (REF D). COMMENT: WE ARE SURPRISED HUNTER'S REACTION TO U.S. REQUEST FOR UK-NETHERLANDS DEMARCHE. IN OUR VIEW, NETHERLANDS ECONOMIC RATIONALE FOR DEFENSE REDUCTION IS FAR WEAKER THAN WAS CASE WITH UK. PREDOMINANT FEELING AT NATO IS THAT IF NETHERLANDS AND OTHERS WOULD COME UP TO LEVEL OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURE TO WHICH UK IS CUTTING, ALLIANCE WOULD BE IN FAR BETTER SHAPE.

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SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 USNATO 4490

4. MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS. ALL DEFENSE ADVISORS AGREED WITH SEIGLE'S POINT THAT DUTCH PROPOSALS MAKE LITTLE SENSE MILITARILY. SCHUNEMANN, CANADA DEFAD (COL. CHILD) AND MACDONALD EXPRESSED VIEW THAT NETHERLANDS, BY ALLOWING DETERIORATION OF AIR ASW TRAINING AND SUPPORT BASE THROUGH NEPTUNE DISESTABLISHMENT WITHOUT REPLACEMENT, MIGHT FIND IT EASY IN FUTURE TO AVOID REPLACEMENT COMPLETELY. ACTING NORWAR DEFAD KLEIVANE, ROSENTHAL, AND MACDONALD ASKED WHETHER U.S. HAD ASCERTAINED REACTION OF MILITARY AUTHORITIES. SEIGLE REPLIED THAT CONTACTS WITH SACLANTREPEUR (MADE EARLIER IN THE DAY BY MISSION OFFICER) HAD REVEALED THAT SACLANT AND CINCHAN ARE WORKING ON AN ASSESSMENT THAT IS NOT YET COMPLETED, BUT WILL MOST LIKELY TAKE A "HARD SECRET

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LINE" AGAINST DUTCH PROPOSALS.

5. COMMENT:

WE CAN EXPECT A STRONG MEASURE OF ALLIED SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY FROM FRG AND BELGIUM, FOR U.S. POSITION OPPOSING DUTCH REDUCTIONS. POLITICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THESE REDUCTIONS (ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY, MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE COMMITMENTS) ARE STRONG. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT NETHERLANDS WILL ARGUE OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND THAT, GIVEN THESE, PROPOSALS MAKE MILITARY SENSE. THEREFORE, AS CONSULTATIONS PROGRESS, BOTH IN MC AND DPC, WE WILL NEED FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN DETAIL:

A. FINANCIAL. IS DEFENSE "TAKING MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE"? WHAT WILL BE EFFECT OF DUTCH 1976 STATE BUDGET IN TERMS OF PERCENT OF GNP DEVOTED TO DEFENSE? WHAT IS PROGNOSIS AFTER 1976? REF E IS VERY USEFUL IN EVALUATION DUTCH FINANCIAL PROBLEMS; TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD THESE REDUCTIONS HELP, I.E., HOW MUCH WILL EACH REDUCTION SAVE IN OPERATING AND PROCUREMENT COSTS, BY YEAR? WE REALIZE THAT ANSWERS WILL BE CLEAR ONLY WHEN STATE BUDGET FOR 1976 IS PRESENTED TO DUTCH PARLIAMENT. IN VIEW OF SHORT FUSE WHICH NETHERLANDS HAS PLACED ON CONSULTATIONS, HOWEVER, WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION THAT AMEMB THE HAGUE CAN PROVIDE AT THIS TIME.

B. MILITARY. WE APPRECIATE NEED FOR SACLANT TO STATE, IN GENERAL TERMS, IMPACT OF THESE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN VIEW OF

THE "SHIFTING BALANCE OF POWER IN THE ATLANTIC AND THE DECLINING ABILITY OF NATO'S NAVAL FORCES TO DEAL WITH THE GROWING MARITIME CAPABILITIES OF THE SOVIET UNION," AS SACLANT DID IN EARLIER (1974) COMMENTS ON NETHERLANDS DEFENSE PLAN (SACLANT 312042Z/MAY/74). HOWEVER, THIS ARGUMENT ALONE WILL NOT SUFFICE, SINCE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS ARE SMALL IN RELATION TO TOTAL NATO NAVAL CAPABILITIES. WE HOPE THAT THE "COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE" BEING PREPARED BY JOINT STAFF (REF F) WILL PROVIDE DETAILED ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- PRECISELY WHAT WOULD BE EFFECT ON TOTAL NUMBERS OF MARITIME AIRCRAFT IN EASTERN ATLANTIC? HOW AND TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD NEPTUNE DISESTABLISHMENT PLACE PRESSURE ON BREGUET ATLANTIC FORCE WITH REGARD TO COMMITMENTS? IN SHORT, WHAT COULD SACLANT AND CINCHAN NOT DO THAT THEY CAN DO NOW, BOTH IN PEACETIME AND WARTIME?

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- WHAT EFFECT WOULD NEPTUNE DISESTABLISHMENT HAVE ON NETHERLANDS LAND-BASED AIR ASW TRAINING BASE? ON SUPPORT CAPABILITY, ESPECIALLY AVIONICS SUPPORT FOR COMPLEX ASW EQUIPMENTS? ON MARITIME AIR BASES? IS IT REASONABLE ON THESE GROUNDS TO FEAR THAT NETHERLANDS, ONCE HAVING DISESTABLISHED NEPTUNE SQUADRONS, WOULD WISH TO AVOID LATER REPLACEMENT ENTIRELY?

- WHAT WOULD BE EFFECT OF DECOMMISSIONING "DE ZEVEN PROVINCIE" (TWENTY-ONE MONTHS BEFORE EARLIER PLANNED) ON ASW GROUP AIR DEFENSE? WHAT WILL NETHERLANDS DO WITH THE SHIP? IS REPLACEMENT DCG CONSTRUCTION ON SCHEDULE? WHAT ARE CHANCES OF SLIPPAGE?

- WHAT WOULD BE TOTAL EFFECT OF REDUCTIONS ON NETHERLANDS NAVAL MANPOWER? END COMMENT. BRUCE

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